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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003430

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: FADHILA PARTY LEADER ON FEDERALISM, GOI INERTIA,
AND SHIA POLITICS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 3375 (SADR-BADR AGREEMENT)

[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 3287 (ISCI'S AMAR AL-HAKIM)

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Fadhila Party CoR bloc leader Hassan al-Shammari told the Ambassador on October 9 that his party supports the broad concept of federalism but opposes formation of sect-based regions as favored by the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI). Complaining at length about GOI "stagnation" and Prime Minister al-Maliki's leadership style, Shammari said Maliki believes he does not need to work with other political leaders as long as he enjoys USG support. Shammari cautioned that Fadhila and other parties will withdraw support from Maliki if he continues to ignore their calls for a comprehensive cabinet reshuffle that replaces political party loyalists with independent technocrats. An occasional ally of the Sadrist Movement's CoR bloc, Shammari surmised that the October 6 truce agreement between the Sadrists and ISCI revealed ISCI's relative weakness, and predicted the pact would not last long (indeed, we have already heard reports of renewed Sadrist-ISCI clashes). End summary.

No to "Sectarian" Federalism, Frustration with Maliki

[1](#)2. (C) After a brief discussion of the recent Biden Amendment in which the Ambassador clarified that the amendment did not call for the partition of Iraq but rather suggested a federal system, Shammari expressed support for the concept of Iraqi federalism but opposed what he characterized as a plan for "sectarian" federalism proposed by the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI). He predicted that regions formed on the basis of sect would be undemocratic, economically backward, prone to internal struggles between competing groups such as ISCI and the Sadrists, and ripe for interference and mischief from neighboring countries. While Fadhila is not opposed to the concept of three broad geographic Iraqi regions, the party insists on non-sectarian sub-regional entities within each region that would function somewhat like U.S. states.

[1](#)3. (C) Shammari bemoaned current GOI "stagnation" and its inability to deliver public services which has led to a cholera epidemic in parts of Iraq. He said Fadhila would have no objection to Prime Minister al-Maliki if only he would listen to and interact with political parties: as matters now stand, Maliki relies on USG support and sends a message to the political class that he does not need them as long as he has USG backing. Shammari, an erudite 42 year-old lawyer, stated he had been talking to Saleh Al-Mutlaq of the Sunni Hiwar Party about appealing directly to Maliki to work with them and other party "symbols" to effect a comprehensive cabinet reshuffle that would bring in experienced technocrats loyal to the GOI as replacements for ineffective politicians loyal to their parties. However, they were prevented from presenting their ideas personally to the PM by Maliki's inner

circle who refused to grant them an appointment. Maliki's door is open only to the Group of Four alignment, he complained, and the Group of Four wishes to preserve the status quo in order to distribute patronage largesse from the ministries they control. Shammari noted that Fadhila, Hiwar and other parties were still willing to join a "national front" in support of Maliki, but only if he stops ignoring the input of political parties. Otherwise, he may face a no-confidence vote.

Shia Politics

¶4. (C) Fadhila often sides with the Sadrists in CoR voting, but party leaders tell us that continuing rivalry between Muqtada al-Sadr and Fadhila spiritual leader Mohammed al-Yacoubi over the legacy of the Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr (Moqtada's late father) populist movement limits closer coordination between the two groups. In reply to the Ambassador's question about the impact of a truce agreement between the respective militias of ISCI and the Sadr Movement (Ref A), Shammari said that ISCI's Badr militia stands to lose more from continued clashes than Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) because JAM fighters are far more violent and zealous than their Badr counterparts. He opined that ISCI sought the agreement from a position of weakness, and predicted the pact would not last long because the Sadrists feel threatened and surrounded by the ISF and MNF. (Note: Less than a week after the agreement was signed, we have already heard reports of renewed JAM-Badr clashes. End Note.)

¶5. (C) With 15 CoR seats, Fadhila was a member of the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) but withdrew from the grouping earlier this year over disagreement, mainly with ISCI, over UIA

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direction. Shammari said the UIA has lost its identity and the once-strong and unified Shia coalition now consists only of ISCI and Maliki's Dawa faction. He stated that Fadhila would consider rejoining UIA if the alliance displayed receptivity to new ideas. Shammari griped about nefarious ISCI intermeddling in the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) through its "control" of a UN representative who advises the Commission. (Note: As detailed in Ref B, ISCI's Amar al-Hakeem and Maliki also alleged shenanigans within IHEC, but they fingered the Sadrists as culprits. End Note.) Fadhila is particularly strong in Basrah, and Basrah's Governor Wa'eli is a Fadhila leader. In reply to the Ambassador's question regarding Basrah's security situation, Shammari again complained about poor Maliki leadership and stated that security conditions could easily be improved if a strong central government appointed fair and competent officials to top security positions in Basrah.

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